

Message Text

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17

ACTION EA-09

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INFO CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 2441

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, RP

SUBJECT: INTERIM NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

REF: MANILA 2232

SUMMARY: LIKELIHOOD OF OPPOSITIONISTS INDEPENDENTLY CONVENING INA, NEBULOUS AT OUTSET NOW APPEARS TOTALLY EPHEMERAL. FORMER PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL'S CAMPAIGN TO FORCE MARCOS TO CONVENE INTERIM NATIONAL ASSEMBLY RUNNING OUT OF STEAM. PREOCCUPATION WITH INA REMAINS PRIMARILY CONCERN OF DISPLACED POLITICAL ELITE WHO WANT IN ON THE ACTION AND IS NOT BURNING NATIONAL ISSUE. MACAPAGAL'S PETITION TO CONVENE INA IS EXCEEDINGLY CRITICAL OF REGIME AND MARCOS MAY FEEL HE HAS TO REACT IN SOME WAY BUT ONLY TIME WILL TELL HOW. END SUMMARY.

1. FORMER PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL'S CAMPAIGN TO FORCE PRESIDENT MARCOS TO CONVENE INTERIM NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (INA) RUNNING OUT OF STEAM. MARCOS TACTICS NOTED REFTTEL SUCCEEDED IN SUBSTANTIALLY CUTTING DOWN ATTENDANCE AT MACAPAGAL LUNCH FEB 17 TO ABOUT 60 CON-CON DELEGATES AND FORMER CONGRESSMEN. AP'S ZEITLIN, WHO ATTENDED SESSION REPORTS GOVERNMENT AGENTS WITH CAMERAS CHECKED IDENTITIES OF OWNERS OF CARS PARKED OUTSIDE HOUSE. ZEITLIN SAYS MACAPAGAL TERMED FEB 12 DE-CONFIDENTIAL

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PARTMENT OF JUSTICE OPINION THAT ANYONE TRYING TO CONVENE

ASSEMBLY WITHOUT PRESIDENT'S AUTHORITY WOULD BE SUBJECT TO ARREST A "THREAT." HE REPORTEDLY CALLED FOR REFERENDUM ON CONVENING INA.

2. AT LUNCH, PETITION REFERRED TO PARA 2 REFTTEL RE-CIRCULATED FOR ENDORSEMENT OF GUESTS. PETITION STATES SIGNERS KEPT SILENT TO GIVE MARCOS A CHANCE TO UNITE COUNTRY BUT IT HAS BECOME DIVIDED AS RESULT OF HIS AUTHORITARIAN RULE. "THE PEOPLE DO NOT LIKE AUTHORITARIAN RULE AND THE COUNTRY IS NOT FARING WELL." ECONOMIC PROBLEMS ARE GETTING WORSE. EXISTING ECONOMIC POLICIES SMACK OF "NEO-COLONIALISM." "PROBLEMS CAN'T BE SOLVED BY EXECUTIVE FIAT OR BY ONE MAN ALONE." PRESIDENT IS BECOMING ISOLATED AND HAS ARROGATED LEGISLATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES AND FUNCTIONS. PEOPLE NOW BELIEVE HE WANTS PERPETUAL POWER FOR HIMSELF, FIRST LADY, AND HANDFUL OF LOYALISTS. HE WILL USE VARIOUS CRISES TO JUSTIFY CONTINUATION OF POWER. "AS AWARENESS OF THIS GROWS IT WILL BURST IN CIVIL STRIFE OR QUICK DEPOSITION OF YOUR REGIME BY POWERFUL HIDDEN FORCES." (COMMENT: WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT MACAPAGAL WILL DO WITH PETITION BUT ONE OF MACAPAGAL'S SUPPORTERS TOLD EMBASSY ISSUE WAS DEAD AND THEY WOULD NOT HAVE ENOUGH BACKING--OR PERHAPS ENOUGH NERV--TO ATTEMPTNYO CALL INA ON THEIR OWN. PETITION BEING POUCHED EA/PHL. END COMMENT)

3. RUMORS THAT MACAPAGAL INITIATIVE ALIVE ARE STILL CIRCULATING. MOST IMAGINATIVE WAS REPORT BY LOCAL PUBLISHER WHO TOLD EMBOFF FEB 18 MACAPAGAL WILL CONVENE INA IF MARCOS DOES NOT. HE CLAIMED MANILA ARCHBISHOP SIN HAS BEEN CONSULTED AND HAS OFFERED USE OF MANILA CATHEDRAL FOR RUMP SESSION. (COMMENT: SIN IS OUT OF THE COUNTRY NOW AND WE FIND IT WHOLLY IMPROBABLE HE WOULD AGREE TO SUCH A STRATEGEM. WE ASSUME RUMORS ARE INSPIRED BY DIEHARD WISHFUL THINKING. END COMMENT)

4. SECRETARY GILBERTO DUAVIT, MARCOS' ACTION OFFICER FOR CON-CON TOLD EMBOFFS FEB 19 MACAPAGAL HAD MADE MISTAKE IN SENDING LETTER TO PHILCONSA PRESIDENT LIM AND BY NOT DISCUSSING HIS COMPLAINT PRIVATELY WITH MARCOS. HE CLAIMED ERRONEOUS PRESS REPORTS LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COUNCIL WOULD CONFIDENTIAL

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SUPPLANT INA GALVANIZED MACAPAGAL. DUAVIT APPEARED RELAXED ABOUT CURRENT SITUATION BUT SAID INA PROBLEM WAS BOUND TO RECUR. POLITICIANS DON'T LIKE TO FEEL "LEFT OUT." DUAVIT'S ASSISTANT HAD EARLIER TOLD EMBOFFS "SERIOUS PROBLEM" HAD BEEN AVERTED; I.E. POSSIBILITY OF INA CONSTITUTING ITSELF, NAMING EXILE AS PM AND THEREBY CREATING GOVERNMENT IN EXILE WHICH UNFRIENDLY STATES MIGHT RECOGNIZE. (COMMENT: DUAVIT ASSISTANT NO DOUBT THINKING OF U.S. AS LOCALE FOR

GOVERNMENT IN EXILE. END COMMENT.)

5. COMMENT: WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE PREOCCUPATION WITH INA IS PRIMARILY CONCERN OF DISPLACED POLITICAL ELITE WHO WANT IN ON THE ACTION AND IS NOT A BURNING NATIONAL ISSUE. MACAPAGAL'S PETITION, HOWEVER, IS EXCEPTIONALLY CRITICAL AND MARCOS MAY FEEL HE HAS TO REACT IN SOME WAY. DUAVIT APPEARS TO FEEL GOVERNMENT HAS MATTER WELL IN HAND BUT FOR MARCOS THE SEGURISTA ANY DOUBTS ARE IRKSOME ESPECIALLY AS HE PREPARES TO DEPART FOR BALI SUMMIT. IN ANY EVENT, LIKELIHOOD OF OPPOSITIONISTS INDEPENDENTLY CONVENING INA, NEBULOUS AT OUTSET, NOW APPEARS TOTALLY EPHEMERAL.
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